FEBRUARY 2004

The Mohegan Way

Long ago, the Earth was formed atop the back of a giant turtle, whom we call Grandfather. At that time, Gunche Mundo (The Great Spirit) breathed a living Spirit into all things: rocks, trees, plants, animals and people. Gunche Mundo created our Mother Tribe, the Lenni Lenape (The Real People), and divided it into three clans—Turtles, Turkeys and Wolves. The Wolf People, known as Mohegans, separated from the Turtles and Turkeys, then headed east toward the rising sun.

—Excerpts from Mohegan oral history

The Mohegan Tribe: A Rich and Vibrant History

Before the Europeans arrived on this continent, Native Americans made this region their home. Thirteen generations ago, Sachem (Chief) Uncas, brought his people to Shantok and the hills of Mohegan. Uncas was a man of might and power, and his domain encompassed much of what is now Connecticut.

Uncas believed that cooperation with the new arrivals would ensure his people's survival. He developed a historic interaction between his tribe and the European settlers.

Uncas and his people played a vital role in helping the new immigrants survive in the New World. Mohegans served as scouts for General Washington's Army and Mohegans have fought with honor for the United States in every war since then.

The English formed the Connecticut Colony in 1636 and formally recognized the sovereignty of the Mohegan Tribe in the Mohegan Treaty of 1638, a recognition that has been maintained through the present day. For over 350 years, treaties and laws have highlighted the Tribe's independent status. At the federal level, the unique rights of Native American tribes were further recognized and laid out in the Constitution of the United States of America.

In 1978, the U.S. Government created a process through which the various Native American tribes could petition for federal acknowledgment. The Mohegans filed for federal recognition that same year. After an intensive review of over 20,000 pages of paperwork documenting the Tribe's history, the Federal Government formally recognized the Mohegan Nation on March 7, 1994.

On September 30, 1995, 240 acres of land that had once made up a part of the most northern portion of the earlier Mohegan reservation, were reacquired by the Tribe and

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Interview with Mark F. Brown

Mark F. Brown,
Chairman of Mohegan Tribal Council

Q1: How does the history of the Mohegan Tribe impact today's Mohegans?

A: Like so many cultural groups in our country, the collective experiences of our people have a tremendous impact on our outlook as individuals and as a Tribe.

Today, as members of the Mohegan Tribe, we are proud citizens of both the United States and the Mohegan Tribal Nation. While our Mohegan heritage dates back centuries, our identity flows right up until today. The opportunities we've had and the challenges we've faced have helped frame today's Tribal government.

Loretta Ann Fielding Schultz (Red Bird), 8/19/00—12/27/82
Grandmother of Mark F. Brown

For example, as American Citizens, we learn that the right to vote is arguably our most significant privilege and obligation. Unfortunately as Mohegans, our ability to vote has been anything but guaranteed. When my grandmother, Loretta Ann Fielding Schultz (Red Bird), went to vote, she was unable to because she was Native American. Despite the 15th Amendment to the Constitution which ensured Blacks the right to vote in 1870 and the 19th Amendment which gave women the right to vote in 1920, most states continued to deny Native Americans the right to vote. Some states limited voting to only "civilized" people while other states claimed that Native American were not citizens. It was not until the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 that the US Government moved to provide Native Americans with this most fundamental right. The unfortunate irony is that the first Americans were the last Americans allowed to vote.

In many ways, the history of the Mohegan people is an extraordinary example of what really happened following the arrival of Europeans and the subsequent development of the United States. It's a story of betrayals and triumphs in which there were repeated efforts to eradicate Native Americans from this land. However, despite all of the challenges that faced our people, the Mohegan Tribe and its members have remained ever proud of our heritage and culture. Growing up, I was taught about the special history and obligations of being both an American and a Mohegan.

Today, there are just over 1,700 members of the Mohegan Tribe. As the children of Uncas, we believe, like he did, that we can celebrate our identity and our culture as Native Americans while being good neighbors.

As Chairman of the Mohegan Tribe, I know I speak for every member of our Tribal Council when I say that the Mohegan Tribe is proud of our close working relationship with our neighbors and we will continue to strive to be an engine of economic growth for Connecticut and the region. We are very proud of the success of the Mohegan Sun. More than 10,000 area residents work at the casino and thousands more have jobs in the community because of our activities. We are also working hard to expand and diversify our economic activities into new areas. Our aquaculture program, for example, is not only creating jobs but is helping to rebuild the environment of Long Island Sound.

As a tribe and as a people, we are very excited about the future and we know that by working together we can and will make Connecticut and our region an even better place to live and raise a family.

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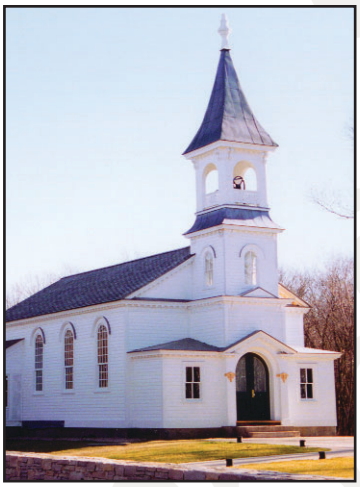

Mohegan Church
Remodeled and Renovated 2001

placed in trust by the United States government. Where once the Mohegan's governed much of the land that is today Eastern Connecticut, the Mohegan Tribe's present federally recognized reservation is the parcel of land located on the western bank of the Thames River, adjacent to the village of Uncasville in the town of Montville, Connecticut.

The Mohegan Tribe has maintained an independent tribal structure since before the Europeans arrived on this land. Today, the Mohegan Nation exercises full civil jurisdiction and concurrent criminal jurisdiction over their lands. The Tribe is governed by a Tribal Constitution which empowers a nine member Tribal Council to serve as the legislative and executive branch, and a seven member Council of Elders which is responsible for judicial oversight and cultural integrity.

With the passage of the Native American Indian Gaming Act in 1998, the Mohegan Tribe successfully negotiated a compact with the State of Connecticut that led to the development of the Mohegan Sun Casino. This historic agreement between the Mohegan Tribe and Connecticut means that 25 percent of slot revenues at the casino are contributed to the state to help fund vital services. This revenue sharing agreement provides hundreds of millions of dollars to Connecticut. As a percentage of proceeds going to state government, it is the most generous tribal revenue sharing program in the United States. Connecticut's Native American tribes are now the single largest source of revenue for Connecticut outside of the Federal Government.

Mohegans are proud to be members of both the Mohegan Nation and the United States of America. The Tribe's dedication to making this land a better place to live and raise a family is nothing new. Since the first contact took place, the Mohegan Tribe has always been committed to good relations with their non-Indian neighbors and always will be. It's called – The Mohegan Way.

The Mohegan language is an Algonquian dialect and is currently undergoing restoration and revival

EXPRESSIONS:

Good evening – "Wigun dupkwa"
Good morning – "Wigwásun"
Good-bye – "Nahánuxag"
Hello – "Aquay"
How are you? – "Nugu táyanu?"
I'm fine – "Tayanu"
My goodness – "Waykojomunk"
OK – "Báwisá"
Thanks – "Tábudnianawayin"
Welcome – "Wigwomun"

NUMBERS:

1 – "nikwut"
2 – "nis"
3 – "ciwi"
4 – "yáw"
5 – "nipaw"
6 – "kudusk"
7 – "nizux"
8 – "ciwiask"
9 – "bazokokwang"
10 – "bayag"

The Mohegans

Centuries ago, the Mohegan people came to this part of the world and thrived. With the arrival of Europeans, their world changed dramatically. The native people were of two minds about the newcomers. Some wanted to fight while others wanted to lend a helping hand. Without the help of the great Mohegan Sachem, Uncas, the early colonists who moved to this area would probably not have survived.

But the sad reality is that the close association between the Mohegans and the Europeans probably accelerated the decline of the Mohegan people due to increased exposure to new disease. A series of smallpox epidemics, the first during the winter of 1634-35, reduced the Native population significantly. By 1639 there were less than 2,500 Native Americans left in this area. Over the next fifty years or so, diseases such as smallpox, influenza, diphtheria and measles continued to decimate Connecticut's Native population.

But the Mohegan Tribe never died out. Throughout the entire history of the United States, the Mohegan Tribe has remained a unique, independent and self-governed Native American tribe.

The Mohegan Tribe of today is proud of its heritage and committed to its future.

Mohegan Tribal Council

Front row (left to right):

"Micimee" Chris Murtha: Corresponding Secretary,
Peter Schultz: Vice Chairman,
"Matahga" Mark F. Brown: Chairman,
"Squayowunxis" Shirley M. Walsh: Recording Secretary

Back row (left to right):

Donald M. Chapman: Treasurer,
"Kikuk" Jayne G. Fawcett: Ambassador,
Roland J. Harris: Councilor,
Maynard L. Strickland: Councilor,
Glenn R. Lavigne: Councilor

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